



Department
for Education

Primary academy chain development grant

Claim form guidance

Primary Academy Chain Development Grant: guidance about the grant

The Secretary of State has agreed a Primary Academy Chain Development Grant offer to support even more primary schools to realise the benefits of being part of strong academy chains.

A one-off grant of £75,000, with up to £5K awarded per additional primary school (maximum total claim for a chain £100K) is available until 30 April 2016, subject to demand and may be offered to:

- 3 schools creating a new MAT (where the majority are primary schools).
- Stand-alone open academies and schools converting into academies; provided they are setting up a minimum 3 school MAT with at least 2 primaries applying to convert (not including a sponsor led school).

Existing MATs are NOT eligible for the £75,000 grant. However, groups of 2 or more primary schools joining an existing MAT, can apply for a one-off grant of £20,000 per primary school (up to a maximum of £80K). The group must join the existing MAT at the same time, later applications to join the MAT will not be eligible for the grant.

A **Small School Supplement** is also available for small primary schools (with under 210 pupils) joining a MAT. Primaries with 100 pupils or less are eligible to apply for £5,000 and those with between 100 and 210 pupils are eligible to apply for £2,000. The supplement is intended to provide additional support to the schools in meeting expenses associated with the conversion process. For details, see Small Schools Supplement terms and conditions and claim form on the DfE website.

The Primary Academy Chain Development Grant can be used flexibly over the course of two years. It is intended to provide financial support to enable new clusters of primary schools to build and formalise their partnership, enabling them to achieve their shared vision of improved results, better outcomes and significantly improved standards more quickly.

Examples of its use include, but are not limited to:

- Covering expenses incurred during the formation and agreement of the chain's new governance arrangements (i.e. setting up the Multi-Academy Trust).
- Recruitment of a school business manager.
- Putting in place a new executive leadership model.
- Funding and planning work to implement flexible deployment of staff across the partner schools.
- Helping cover some of the costs of consolidating administrative functions across the new chain.
- Restructuring and increasing the internal cross chain school improvement and CPD capacity expertise and best practice to bring about improvements in standards across the board.
- Engaging lawyers or education specialists to assist the implementation of new governance structures.

Conditions for claiming the grant

In order to claim the grant, schools must meet the following conditions:

- The chain must intend to use a **Multi Academy Trust (MAT)** governance model and have received their Academy Orders supporting this model.
- The grant can be used flexibly, as per the examples above, but can only be used for the establishment of and advancement of the MAT as a whole.
- **3 schools creating a new MAT.** The group of schools applying to convert can include a secondary school but must include a **majority of primary schools** (or special schools with primary age pupils) and the grant can only be used for the benefit of the primary schools in the chain.
- **Stand-alone open academies or schools converting to academies, provided they are setting up a MAT with at least 2 primaries applying to convert.** This is over and above any schools within the MAT being sponsored and the MAT must contain a majority of primary Academies.
- **Groups of 2 or more primary schools joining an existing MAT,** can apply for a one-off grant of £20,000 per primary school (up to a maximum of £80k). The group must join the existing MAT at the same time, later applications to join the MAT will not be eligible for the grant.

Within one year of receipt your chain will need to:

- Provide a case study for the Department for Education website; and
- use your experience to help others. This could include; becoming an academy sponsor; applying for teaching school status; mentoring another group of primaries interested in conversion.

Grant decisions will be subject to consideration of the availability, or awarding of, alternative funding sources, including those previously received by potential applicants.

If you are unsure if you are eligible for PACDG, your Department contact/Project Lead will be able to advise. If you are unsure who your contact is, please email

PACDG.Mailbox@education.gsi.gov.uk

Before submitting an application for Primary chain funding, please read the following:

1. All schools eligible to receive the grant will be required to have received their Academy Order before their grant is processed. The funds can only be used as set out in the **Conditions for claiming the grant** on the previous page. Grant decisions will be subject to consideration of the availability, or awarding of, alternative funding sources, including those previously received by potential applicants.
2. You should retain records to show that the grant has been used for the establishment and advancement of the MAT, for 6 years after the end of the financial year in which the expenditure has taken place. The books and records of the school relating to the claiming and use of grant will be open to inspection by the National Audit Office and representatives of the Secretary of State as and when they may require. You are also required to complete the **Certificate of Expenditure within two years of receipt of the grant**.
3. In the event that the conversion into a MAT does not occur then any unused grant should be repaid to the Secretary of State within 10 working days of notifying us that you are withdrawing your application to convert into a MAT academy chain.
4. In the event that a primary school/s withdraw from membership of the MAT prior to their conversion you must notify your project lead. Should the remaining schools still intend to convert into the new MAT you may apply to the Secretary of State to keep the remaining grant confirming that it is still to be used for the same purposes as set out above. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis. Should your application be unsuccessful any unused grant should be repaid to the Secretary of State within 10 working days of the decision.
5. Should another primary school/s apply to join the MAT prior to the MAT opening you should notify your project lead, who will advise whether the school/s are eligible for the additional grant (£5k). Once the MAT is open and you have claimed PACDG, schools joining at a later date are NOT eligible for the grant.
6. When procuring goods and services for the MAT, you are reminded of the requirement to comply with EU and UK procurement law and regulations when appropriate.
7. This grant must only be used for the benefit of the MAT as a whole, and all decisions regarding how the grant is to be spent must be taken in partnership with the rest of the schools also joining the Trust. A signature from each school intending to join the MAT is required before the application can be processed.
8. To register a request for funding, please complete and sign the **PACDG finance claim form** and send the completed form via PACDG.Mailbox@education.gsi.gov.uk stating the name of your MAT, your LA region and your project lead name in the covering email. Once your application has been approved the grant payment will be processed.
9. This Grant guidance and relevant forms together make up the Grant Funding Agreement. Any grant paid by the Secretary of State will be paid pursuant to Section 14, Education Act 2002 and will accordingly be paid only in respect of approved expenditure incurred by the MAT for the purpose of the funded activities. This letter must be read in conjunction with the relevant forms.



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